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TALES OF ALL TIME

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ARTHUR MEE

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PREFACE

The dozen Tales that follow are among the veritable Classics of the world's stories. Time that sifts the grain from the chaff and the perdurable from the perishable, has long ago pronounced its verdict in their favour.

Any claim to scholarship is vain and meaningless without an intimate acquaintance with these stories, which as indispensable to culture, we offer to the reading and the school-going public.

For permission to reprint these stories from the great treasure-house of knowledge, "The Children's Cyclopædia" we are indebted to that illustrious man who alone with Viscount Baden Powel, shares the homage of the world of boys and girls, unlimited by space or time—*Arthur mee*.

PUBLISHER

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TALES OF ALL TIME

I

ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES

Ali Baba was a poor man who lived with his wife in a town in Persia, and one day he went into the forest to cut some firewood. He saw a band of forty thieves; and so he climbed into a tree and hid himself. The tree grew beside a great rock, and the forty thieves came to this rock, and cried: "Open Sesame!"

A door opened leading into a cave, and the forty thieves went in and placed there the gold and silver they had stolen. Then they came out, and cried: "Shut Sesame!"

Then the cave closed up, and they rode away. Ali Baba then came down from the tree, and cried: "Open Sesame."

Again the cave opened, and he entered, and found himself in a sort of treasure-house, stored with sacks of gold and silver; and, seeing that it had all been stolen, Ali Baba seized as many sacks as he could carry and took them home.

"Now," he said to his wife, "I will soon grow as rich as my brother Cassim."

And this thought pleased them very much for his brother was a proud and haughty man, who had married a very wealthy woman.

"We must measure how much gold we've got," said Ali Baba's wife joyfully.

So she went to Cassim's house and asked for the loan of a measure. Cassim's wife wondered what sort of grain her poor sister-in-law had got. So she put some wax under the measure, and when the measure was returned to her, she found, to her immense surprise, a piece of gold sticking to it. She at once told Cassim; and Cassim went to Ali Baba and asked him where he had got his gold from. Ali Baba frankly told his brother about the treasure-house in the rock, and told him how to open and shut the cave.

"I'll have all that gold carried away before Ali Baba gets a share of it," said Cassim to himself.

He at once took ten mules to the cave with the idea of loading them with all the sacks. He cried, "Open Sesame!" and got into the cave, and danced with delight when he saw how much treasure there was. But at last he became so excited that when he wanted to take away the sacks he forgot the words that opened the cave.

Cassim cried "Open Sesame" and the cave opened.

"Open Barley!" he cried, "Open Wheat!"

While he was trying to think of the right word the forty thieves returned and found him in the cave, and killed him there.

The next day Ali Baba went to get some more gold, and he discovered in the cave the body of his brother, and carried it away and had it decently buried. Then, in accordance with Persian customs, he took his widowed sister-in-law to live with him; and with her came a clever female slave, whose name was Morgiana.

When the forty thieves found that the body of Cassim had been removed from the cave they were full of fear.

"So there's another man who knows our secret!" said the captain. "But I know how to find him."

He disguised himself and went to the town, and enquired if a man who had been slain by the sword had recently been buried; and he at last learned that just such a man was buried by Ali Baba.

"Now" said the captain of the thieves to his men, "I must arrange to get all of you quietly into the house of this Ali Baba: and you must come out at night and kill everybody there, and escape without being seen."

So he brought some of the huge leather jars in which the Persians used at that time to keep their oil, and he got a thief to get into each one of them, and covered them up leaving a little space for air. He then put them all on some mules, and took with him one jar really filled with oil, in case he should be called upon to show what he carried, and travelled at night from the forest into the town, and stopped before Ali Baba's house.

"I have brought my oil from a good distance," he said to Ali Baba, "and it is now too late to go to an inn. Will you kindly put me up for the night?"

Being a kind hearted man, Ali Baba welcomed the captain of the forty thieves, and told the servants to look after the mules and bring in the jars. Morgiana was sent to cook a supper for the strange guest. Finding that she had no oil to fry the meat in, she went to take a little out of one of the jars. When she approached, the thief thought she was the captain, and whispered cautiously:

"Is it time?"

"Not yet" said Morgiana.

She went from jar to jar and found there was a thief in each, and at last she came to the jar which was filled with oil. She heated

the oil in a great kettle, and then crept up to the jars and poured in the hot liquid, and sealed all the thieves to death.

"Now we shall see what will happen," said Morgiana.

In the dead of night the captain tried to arouse the thieves; but after peeping into the jars he saw that his men were all dead, and he rushed quickly out of the house. In the morning Morgiana told Ali Baba the whole story and Ali Baba, much astonished, buried, the dead thieves secretly the next night.

"But remember," said Morgiana, "there is one thief still at large, and you must be on your guard, for he will never rest until he has killed every one of us who knows his secret."

Morgiana was right. For the captain of the forty thieves soon returned in a new disguise, and set up as a shop-keeper, and tried to make friends with Ali Baba and get an opportunity of killing him. One day Ali Baba invited the captain to come to supper.

Now, there is a very strange law of honour which all Persians and other Mohammedans strictly observe. Even the very worst man among them will not kill anybody with whom he has eaten salt. So the captain of the thie-

ves said to Ali Baba: "I should be pleased to sup with you, my friend, but I must confess I have a very curious taste. I can't bear the least bit of salt in my dish."

"Oh that's easily arranged!" said Ali Baba, and he told Morgiana not to put any salt in the meat for supper; and that made Morgiana suspicious.

"So your new friend is a man who will not eat salt with you!" she said, "I must have a look at him."

She did so, and, in spite of the new disguise, she saw that he was the captain of the thieves. Moreover, she saw a dagger hidden in his dress. So she said to Ali Baba: 'Tell your stranger friend that one of your slave girls will come and dance before him after supper."

When the supper was over she entered the room, attired in a beautiful dress, and began to dance the dagger dance. She whirled round and round in graceful movements, holding a dagger in her hand, and then rushed at Ali Baba and pretended to stab him. Then she lightly danced up to the captain of the forty thieves, but, instead of pretending to stab him, she drove the dagger into his heart.

"I recognised the villain!" she said.

Then she showed the dagger hidden in his dress. Ali Baba then married Morgiana to his eldest son, and gave her as a dowry a large share of the treasure in the cave in the forest.

II

ALADDIN AND THE WONDERFUL LAMP

An African magician came to China to find a wonderful lamp.

To find it he had to crawl through a passage leading to a fairy palace beneath the earth.

The passage was very small, and whoever let his dress touch the walls was killed by magic. The magician did not like to risk his own life, so he made friends with a Chinese boy, called Aladdin and took him to the palace.

"In this palace," said the magician, "a treasure is hidden. Do what I tell you and you will become the richest man on earth. Keep this ring on your finger, and do not let your clothes touch anything until you have put out the little lamp that burns in

the garden and placed it in your pocket. Then you can take away as much treasure as you wish."

Down jumped Aladdin into the passage leading to the palace. He found the lamp in a garden where diamonds and pearls and rubies grew upon the trees. Putting it under his vest, he filled his pockets with jewels and returned as quickly as he could to the passage.

"Give me the lamp, and then I will help you out," said the magician.

"No," said Alladdin: "help me out and then I will give you the lamp."

This made the magician very angry, and he closed up the opening in the earth and went back to Africa.

For two days Aladdin wandered about the fairy palace without finding anything to eat or any way of escape. On the third day he happened to rub the ring which the magician had put on his finger. A spirit then appeared before him, and said:

"I am the slave of the ring. What do you wish me to do?"

"Please take me home," said Aladdin.

In the twinkling of an eye he found himself outside his mother's house. She was

a poor widow, and had nothing for him to eat and no money to buy him anything. So he gave her the wonderful lamp, and asked her to sell it and get some bread.

"It is very dirty," she said, giving it a brisk rub.

A spirit then appeared, and said:

"I am the slave of the lamp. What do you wish me to do?"

The widow was too frightened to reply, but Aladdin boldly said:

"Please bring us something nice to eat."

In the twinkling of an eye, a table appeared on which there were all kinds of meat and wine, in dishes of gold and goblets of crystal.

Having dined in this manner, Aladdin went out for a walk, just as the daughter of the King was riding by. Princess Badroulboudour was a lovely girl, and Aladdin fell in love with her. He went indoors and rubbed the wonderful lamp and said to the spirit:

"Please make me rich and build me the finest mansion in the world."

In the twinkling of an eye, Aladdin and his mother found themslves in a palace of gold, with six hundred servants to wait upon them, and wealth enough to buy a kingdom. They sent forty basins of gold filled with

diamonds and pearls and rubies to the King and he was so pleased with the gift that he allowed Aladdin to marry Princess Badroulboudour.

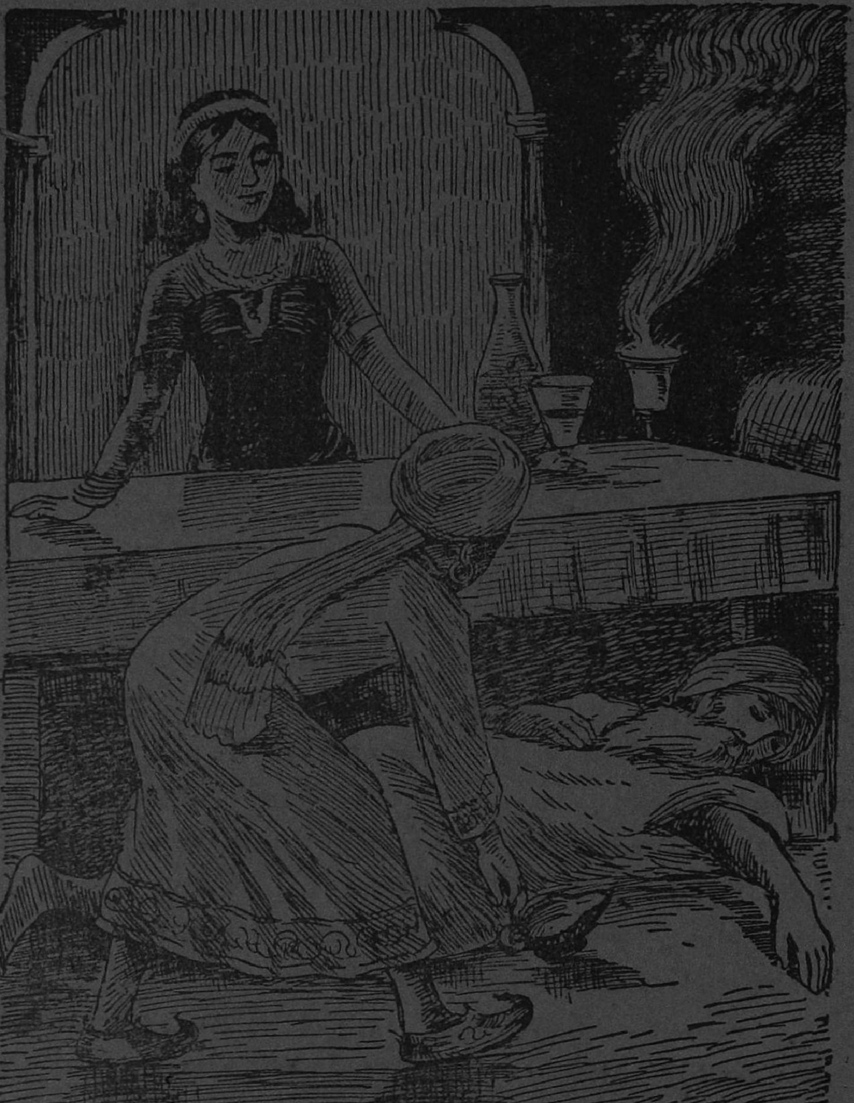
For some time Aladdin and his wife lived together in peace in the palace of gold, and then the African magician came again to try to get the wonderful lamp. He found that Aladdin was away hunting, and disguising himself as a hawker, he walked round the palace shouting.

"New lamps for old! Who will change new lamps for old?"

"I will," said the Princess, running out into the courtyard.

The Princess, remembered that there was a little dirty lamp in Aladdin's room, and she brought it out and, in exchange for a large, bright, new one, gave it to the magician. It was the wonderful lamp! So the magician at once rubbed it, and commanded the spirit to carry the palace of gold and everything in it to the farthest part of Africa.

"Am I dreaming?" said Aladdin, when he came back from hunting. Where his palace had stood, there was only a patch of bare ground. Happily, he still wore the magic ring which the magician had placed on his finger and he now happened to rub it again.



Aladdin rushed out and found the lamp in the magician's pocket.

"What do you wish me to do?" said the slave of the ring.

"Please bring back my wife and my palace," said Aladdin.

"Only the slave of the lamp can do that," replied the spirit.

"Well, take me to Princess Badroulboudour," said Aladdin.

And in the twinkling of an eye, he found himself sitting beside his wife at a dinner table in his palace in the farthest part of lonely Africa.

They were overjoyed to see one another, but before they were able to escape, the magician came upstairs to dine with the Princess.

Aladdin quickly crept under the table and placed a powder in his wife's hand, which she put in her glass of wine.

"Here is excellent wine," she said to the magician "just taste it."

The bad magician drank the wine eagerly and down he dropped, dead.

Aladdin rushed out, found the lamp in the magician's pocket, and rubbed it.

"Oh, please," he said to the spirit, "take the palace back to the place from which it was removed!"

Immediately the palace was taken up from the spot on which it stood in Africa, and set down in China, opposite to the palace of the king, who was so delighted to see them again that he gave them all his riches and made them his heirs.

III
ANDROCLES AND THE LION

Androcles was a poor Roman slave who was carried away to Northern Africa many hundreds of years ago. His life was very hard and painful, and his master was a very cruel man. At last he resolved that he would try to escape to the sea coast, and get back to Rome.

He knew that if he were caught he would be put to death; so he waited till the nights were dark and moonless, and he then crept out of his master's house and stole through the town, and got into the open country.

On and on he hastened through the darkness as fast as his legs would carry him. But when the day broke he found that, instead of making towards the sea-coast, he had struck into the great lonely desert. He was tired out, hungry, and thirsty, and seeing a cave in the

side of some cliffs, he crept into it, lay down, and very soon fell into a gentle sleep. Suddenly he was awakened by a terrible roaring, and, starting to his feet, he beheld a huge tawny lion standing at the entrance to the cave. Androcles had been sleeping in its den. He could not escape; the great lion barred the way. Terror-stricken, he waited for the great beast to spring upon him and kill him with one blow.

But the lion did not move. It moaned and licked one of its paws, from which blood was flowing. Seeing that the animal was in great pain, Androcles forgot his terror, and came forward, and the lion held up its paw, as if it were asking Androcles for help.

Androcles then perceived that a great thorn had got into the paw and cut it, and made it swell. He drew the thorn out with a quick movement, and then pressed the swelling and stopped the flow of blood.

Relieved of the pain, the grateful lion limped out of the cave, and in a few minutes it returned with a dead rabbit, which it laid beside Androcles. When the poor slave had cooked and eaten the rabbit, the lion led him to a place in the cliffs where there was a spring of fresh water gushing from the earth.

For three years the man and the lion lived in the cave. They hunted together and slept together, and the great, shaggy, affectionate creature used to lie down at night at Androcles feet, and slowly wag its huge tail from side to side, as a cat does when it lies before the fire and feels happy and comfortable.

But at last Androcles began to weary for the society of his fellow-men. So he left the cave, but was soon caught by some soldiers and sent as a fugitive slave to Rome. The ancient Romans were very cruel to run-away slaves, and they sentenced Androcles to be killed by wild beasts in the arena on the first public holiday.

A vast multitude of spectators came to see the pitiful sight, and among them was the Emperor of Rome, who sat on a high seat above the arena surrounded by his senators. Androcles was pushed into the great open space, and a new lance was thrust into his hand. With this, he was told, he would have to defend himself against a powerful lion which had been kept for days without food to make it savage and fierce. So the poor man had a very poor chance of surviving.

He trembled when the hungry lion sprang out of its cage with a terrible roar, and the

Androcles patted the lion.

lance shook in his feeble grasp as the huge beast came bounding up to him. But instead of rushing fiercely at him, and bearing him down, it wagged its tail and began to lick his hands. Androcles then saw that it was his own lion with whom he had lived in the cave, and he patted it and leaned on its head and cried.

All the spectators marvelled at the strange scene, and the Emperor sent for Androcles, and asked him for an explanation of it. And he was so delighted with the wonderful story that he made Androcles a free man. Thereafter Androcles used to walk about Rome, and the faithful lion followed him like a dog wherever he went.

IV
CINDERELLA

In the days of the fairies there was a little girl named Cinderella. She had no mother but she lived in a great house with her father and was the happiest little girl in the world.

One day a strange lady came to the house with her two daughters; they were so finely dressed and so proud-looking that Cinderalla felt very shy. But when her father told her

that the strange lady was her new mother, her step-mother and that the proud-looking young ladies were her new sisters, she thought they would be kind to her.

But the sisters were very unkind to poor Cinderella. They took her toys away and gave her all the hard work to do. She had to wash up the cups and saucers and sweep the floors. Sometimes, when she had done her work, she would watch the fire-fairies playing among the cinders; and that is why they called her Cinderella.

One day Cinderella heard that the King was to give a very grand ball. The Prince was to be there, and all the great people were to dance with him. The proud sisters were going but nobody thought of taking little Cinderella.

And Cinderella was very sad.

"I should like to go," she sobbed, when she saw her sisters' lovely dresses.

But when the carriage came and took the sisters to the palace, poor little Cinderella was left all alone. She sat down on her stool and cried till the big tears splashed down on her little brown frock.

Then suddenly came a voice.

"And you shall go," said some body.

Cinderella looked up, and there, standing at her side, was a fairy.

"I am your fairy godmother," she said, "now, if you do just as I tell you, and ask no questions, you shall see what I can do."

She kissed Cinderella and gently wiped away her tears.

"First of all you must fetch me a pumpkin," she said.

Cinderella ran into the garden and brought the largest pumpkin she could find. The fairy godmother bent down and touched it with her wand, and suddenly, as quick as lightning, the pumpkin was turned into the grandest coach Cinderella had ever seen.

"Now I want a mouse-trap," said her godmother, smiling at her.

Away ran Cinderella and when she brought the mouse-trap, with six mice in it, the fairy touched that too. Suddenly, in a minute, the six wee little mice were changed into six lovely white horses.

"And now," said the fairy, "bring me a rat and two lizards."

Cinderella brought them, and the fairy turned them into a coachman and two great footmen.

Cinderella clapped her hands for joy.

"Shut your eyes!" cried the fairy.

Cinderella shut her eyes tight, and when she opened them again, she found that she

The God-mother helped Cinderella by converting a pumpkin into a fine chariot

had on a beautiful frock, grander than any she had ever seen, and on her feet were two little glass slippers. The fairy opened the coach door.

"Jump in," she cried, and drive away to the ball! But remember one thing. Remember that you must be home before the clock strikes twelve. Promise that you will obey me."

Cinderella promised, and drove off to the ball. When she got to the palace, who should come to meet her but the Prince himself! He took Cinderella's hand and led her into the ball-room, while everybody looked at them.

Cinderella enjoyed dancing with the Prince so much that she forgot all about the time until she caught sight of the clock. It was just going to strike twelve, and Cinderella became so frightened that she jumped up quickly and ran out the ball-room as fast as she could go, so fast that one of her slippers came off.

But she could not wait to pick it up. On she ran, through the ball-room and down the stairs, past the tall footmen, and as she reached the door the clock struck twelve.

Cinderella trembled, and ran out into the

street, but alas! the coach and horses had vanished. She looked at herself, and found that her pretty dress had vanished too, and the little brown frock was there instead.

Poor little Cinderella cried all the way home, and when the sisters came back they found her sobbing among the cinders.

The next day the King's messenger went round the city blowing a silver trumpet, and all the people came out to listen. He said the Prince had found a glass slipper which belonged to a beautiful lady he had danced with at the ball. No one knew who she was, but the Prince had fallen in love with her, and wanted to marry her.

All the ladies of the land came to try on this wonderful glass slipper, but it was so tiny that none of them could wear it. At last the messenger came to the house where Cinderella lived. The step-sisters were so excited that they could hardly wait to unfasten their shoes, but when Cinderella saw the slipper, she knew it at once. It was her shoe which had slipped off in her hurry when the clock struck twelve.

"Please let me try it!" she said.

"You, indeed!" cried the sisters, pushing her away.

But the messenger put out his hand and helped Cinderella into the chair. She took off her old shoe and put out her foot, and in a minute the wonderful slipper was on. It fitted perfectly.

Suddenly there was a sound like a rushing wind, and in a moment the fairy godmother was at Cinderella's side, and Cinderella was a grand lady again.

Cinderella stepped into the coach which was waiting for her at the door, and drove away to the palace, where the Prince met her and made her his bride.

V
SINDBAD THE SAILOR

As Sindbad the Sailor was sitting in the mansion which he had built in the city of Baghdad he heard a poor porter in the street say: "Men are not rewarded according to their merit. I have worked harder than Sindbad, and yet he lives in splendour and I live in misery."

Sindbad was moved by the porter's complaint, and he invited him to come in and listen to the story of his adventures.

"Perhaps when you have learned by

what sufferings I won my wealth," said Sindbad "you will be more contented. Look at my white hair and worn face! I seem an old man. But how young and strong I was when I sailed away to make my fortune by trading in strange countries! Soon after we departed, our ship was becalmed near a little island, and we got out to look at the place. But what we had taken for an island was only the green back of a great whale.

"As soon as we landed, it began to sway to and fro, and then it plunged beneath the waves and left us struggling in the sea. Clinging to a piece of wood, I was washed ashore on a desert island.

"On wandering about I found a clump of fruit tress, and hidden among these was a great white ball about fifty feet high. After eating some of the fruit I crept beneath the great white ball, and lay down to sleep. Just as I was closing my eyes I looked up, and saw that the sky was darkened by the wings of a gigantic bird.

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed, "This great white ball is the egg of that monstrous kind of bird that sailors call a roc.

"And so it was. The roc settled on the egg under which I was lying, and one of

its claws, which was as big as the trunk of a tree stuck in my dress.

"At daybreak the roc flew up into the air, and carried me to such a height that I could not see the Earth. Then it descended with such speed that I nearly lost my senses. As it alighted I freed my dress from its claws, and found myself in a deep valley cut off from the world by a circle of high, steep mountains.

"It was the Valley of Diamonds! The ground was covered with precious stones. Full of joy, I began to fill my pockets with them, but my joy was soon turned to terror. The velley was haunted by great serpents, and search as I might, I could find no means of escape.

"I crept into a cave, and blocked up the opening with a large stone, but all I was kept awake by the hissing of the serpents. At daybreak they retired, as they were afraid of the roc that used then to visit the valley in search of food. So I stole out of the cave, and I was then knocked over by something that came tumbling down the mountains. It was a great piece of fresh meat. As it rolled along, the diamonds on the ground stuck to it. Looking up, I saw

on the mountains a band of men who were preparing to roll down another piece of meat.

"I have heard of the means of getting diamonds." I said to myself. "It strikes me that it is also a good means of getting away."

"I then tied myself to the piece of meat, and hid beneath it, and presently an eagle swooped down and seized the meat and carried it to its nest on the top of the mountains. The band of men drove the eagle away, and turned the meat over to pick off the diamonds that had stuck to it, and found me tied to it.

"When they had got the diamonds they needed, we all sailed for home. But on passing the desert island my companions landed with an axe and broke open the great white ball. A terrible scream rang through the sky. The roc had seen them! They rushed back to the ship, and we quickly sailed away; but the roc followed us, bearing in its claws a vast piece of granite. This it dropped on our ship, and down we all went into the sea. Holding on to a fragment of wreckage with one hand, and swimming with the other, I managed to reach another island.

"It was a delicious spot! Sparkling streams ran between vineyards full of grapes

Sindbad the sailor carrying the Old man of the Sea.

and orchards full of fruit. There I met a strange old man, who made signs to me to carry him over one of the streams. As soon as I hoisted him on my back the old man threw his legs over my neck and squeezed my throat so that I fainted. When I recovered, he was still fixed on my shoulders. There he remained all day and all night, and when I awoke next morning, there he was still. He never got off.

"He made me his slave. When, in order to keep up my strength, I made some wine out of the grapes, he took it from me and drank it all up. Happily, it was too strong for him, and, releasing his hold of my neck, he fell to the ground, and I killed him.

"By the shore I met some sailors, with whom I returned to Baghdad.

"That was the Old Man of the sea," they said to me. "You are the first person who has escaped from being at last strangled by him."

"Now don't you think," said Sindbad to the porter, "that I have earned all the riches that I brought away from the Valley of Diamonds?"

The porter agreed that he had, and Sindbad then gave him a handsome present, and

he went home more contented with his own lot in life.

VI
WILLIAM TELL

On fair day there walked across the market square of Altdorf, in Switzerland as fine a looking man as one could wish to see. Tall and straight, broad and shapely, with ruddy, bearded face and proudly-held head, this man of the mountains strode with clean, swinging stride across the square, a look of bright happiness in his eyes, and a cheerful word of greeting for his friends.

Many turned to say, "There goes William Tell, the cross-bowman of Burglen."

This man, who was said to be the finest cross-bowman in Switzerland and the best handler of a boat on the storm-swept lake of Uri, lived quietly in a mountain cottage with a wife who shared his every thought, and children for whom it was his pleasure and delight to work.

He hunted deer in the mountains, and went a-fishing on the lake. His children never lacked good food and decent clothing. His home was trim and neat. There was

no family in that district more firmly established in peace and content.

Tell had sold the pack of deer skins which he had brought with him to Altdorf. He was on his way now to buy winter-clothing of warm wool for his children. He had money enough and to spare, and he was in a mood of great happiness. In an hour or more he would be singing a song on the road to his mountain home.

Suddenly he felt his arm seized, and found himself in the grip of an Austrian soldier. In another instant, he was surrounded. The solider who had seized his arm pointed to a pole with the ducal cap on the top of it.

"It is death not to bow to that cap, and you know it!" said the solider.

A silence fell upon the whole square. People left their trading, and crowded round the group. A thing greater than trade was at stake now - a man's freedom, a nation's liberty.

William Tell had flushed a deeper red. He brought his eyes from the cap on the pole to the soldier's face.

"I have done nothing unlawful," he said slowly.

"You have insulted the majesty of the Duke!" said the soldier.

William Tell kept a steady eye.

"Why," said he, "should a man show more reverence to an empty cap than to any empty cloak or a pair of hose?"

At this, there came from behind the soldiers the figure of the governor of the district, the tyrant Gessler.

It was the Gessler who, set over the once free Swiss by their conqueror and oppressor the Duke of Austria, had trodden liberty under foot, had murdered and imprisoned all who stood against him, and, as a last barbarity, had declared that everyone who did not do homage to the badge of Austrian rule set up on the pole in their market-place, should die.

William Tell faced the governor. He feared no man. No one could break his proud spirit. On his mountain he had brooded upon the shame of the slavery which enchained his country, and had already spoken with his friends of resistance. Never, never, would he do homage to the hated badge of the tyrant's mastery.

"So you would make a jest of the sign of majesty?" asked the governor, approaching him, while the soildiers saluted. At that moment there came from the crowd a child's cry of "Father! Father!!"

The crowd turned about, opened out, and presently William Tell's little son, who had come without leave to the fair, was rushing to his father.

The governor caught the boy's arm.

"Is this the brave traitor's son?" he asked scornfully.

"Hurt him not," said Tell. "He is my first-born."

"Oh, I won't hurt him!" answered the terrible Gessler. "If any harm should come to him it will not be by me, but by you." A horrible smile lighted his eyes. "Here," said he to a soldier, "take the boy and tie him to the trunk of that linden tree over there, and place an apple on his head."

"What is that for?" demanded Tell.

"I am told that you are called the cross-bowman of Burglen," replied the governor, "and I should like you to give me an exhibition of your skill. Your life is forfeit. But I am in a merciful mood; I will give you a chance of redeeming it. Come, listen to me. If at this distance you can shoot an arrow so as to split the apple on the head of your first-born, I will let you go free. It not—if you miss the apple or kill your child—I will execute you here and now."

"Have you no mercy?" cried Tell, trembling with indignation. "And do you think I will attempt to save my own life at the risk of my son's?"

"I am doing you a favour," replied Gessler, "think. By a lucky shot you may save your life and go home!"

Tell held out a hand which trembled.

"How can a man who loves his son, aim with a steady hand an inch above his temples? Look at the child! Ah, My lord, look at him! He is no kin of yours; you know nothing of the pretty ways by which he has climbed into a fafher's heart, the innocence of his eyes, the beauty of his face! Am I to risk that life?"

Gessler laughed brutally.

"Well, you either shoot or die."

"Then I will die."

"And first your child shall have his neck wrung before your eyes."

A blinding passion of indignation overswept the noble soul of the mountaineer.

"Give me the bow" he said. "One thing in mercy I ask. Let the child's face be turned away from me. Let me not see his eyes fixed upon me."

A way was cleared between father and son. A dense multitude stood on each side. The

boy, his face to the tree, bound by ropes to its trunk, felt the apple weigh like lead upon his head.

A dreadful silence fell upon the market square. William Tell chose two arrows. One he thrust in his girdle; one he fitted to his bow-string. Then for a moment he stood a little bowed of shoulder, with his eyes downcast; he was praying. You might have heard a leaf fall; so still were the people gathered round.

Then Tell raised his head; his eyes were steady; his hands had become still; his face was like iron. He brought the crossbow to his shoulder, and laid his eye to the feather of the shaft. *Twang!*

The arrow shot forward, and, as it were at the same moment, buried itself deep in the tree. The apple fell in equal parts on either side of the boy's head.

A roar of cheering went up to heaven, and Gessler turned to Tell.

"A good shot, traitor!" he said cruelly.

"But tell me, for what reason did you take two arrows?"

Tell laid his hand upon the arrow in his girdle.

"If the first arrow had hurt my child," he said, "this one by now would be through your heart!"

"Oh! So I run in danger of my life?" said the governor. "But I will keep the pledge I gave you. You shall not die. I will give you your life. But the rest of that life, you will spend in the dungeons of my castle, and your bowstring will not then be a danger to me."

At this Tell was seized again, and rushed by the soldiers through the scowling mob to the quay, where the governor's ship was moored.

But as the ship crossed the lake of Uri a storm arose, and it seemed as if everyone would be drowned. The Austrians could not manage the vessel, and began to abandon all hope of saving her.

In their panic they remembered that Tell was reputed to be the best handler of ships in that part of the world, and they spoke to the governor.

"Loose him, and let him take the helm," said Gessler.

Tell got the vessel to right herself, and set her head for the opposite coast. But he was now thinking, not of Gessler and the Austrian soldiers, but of freedom, his own freedom, and the freedom of Switzerland.

He brought the ship close to a rock that jutted out from the coast, and then sprang

suddenly upon the rock, and left the Austrians to save themselves.

Swift of foot, he scaled the rocks, climbed the cliff, and made his way across the mountains, to a place on the road which Gessler, if he saved himself, would have to pass. Here he lay concealed among the bushes with an arrow fitted to his bow-string, his heart set on delivering Switzerland from the tyrant.

Presently, as he waited, there came to him the sound of the tramping of feet.

"And if I live to return to Altdorf," Gessler was saying, "I Swear I will destroy the whole brood of this traiter Tell, mother and childern, all in the same hour.

"You shall never return," said Tell to himself. And, as the soldiers went marching on, he let fly the arrow, and Gessler dropped dead in the dust.

William Tell inspired the rising of the Swiss people which led to the overthrow of the Austrians, and made Switzerland a free country.

They would have made him king, but he shook his head, and went back to his home among the mountains, which was more to him than many palaces.

VII
THE HEAVY BAGS OF GOLD

Once, far away in the East, there lived in the city of Baghdad a man called Hassan. Hassan and his wife Fatima were very avaricious. Though Hassan was one of the Caliph's servants and well paid, he pretended to be very poor.

They lived in a miserable hovel, wore shabby clothes, and only bought what was necessary to keep them alive. Hassan and Fatima saved many gold pieces every month. These they put away in an old sack, which they hid in their hovel and their greatest pleasure was to count over the coins when they were alone.

Every year Hassan and his wife grew richer and greedier, till at last they began to begrudge even the little they spent on their food. Then Hassan was seized with a brilliant idea.

"When next you go to the bazaar, Fatima," he said, "you must say the Caliph has put me in prison for no reason at all. Then the vendors will be sorry for you, and give you food for nothing."

"That is excellent," said Fatima, "but what if they see you coming home?"

"I will come at night," said Hassan.

When Fatima next went to do her shopping, she had a very sad tale to tell.

"But do not say anything about it," she added, "or it may reach the Caliph's ears, and that would make it worse for us."

The vendors in the bazaar were sorry for Fatima, and gave her all the scraps they did not want or could not sell. In this way Hassan and Fatima were able to live on nothing for quite a long time, but at last the vendors became suspicious.

"You should go to your relations and tell them about it" they said to Fatima. "We have done enough for you."

"That is a good idea," said Hassan, when Fatima told him what had happened. "It is time our relations helped us."

Hassan and Fatima had avoided their relations for a long time; but, like her husband, Fatima would do anything for gold. So she swallowed her pride and went round to see them all in turn. The rich helped her from a sense of duty, and the poor gave all they could spare, so that again Hassan and Fatima were able to live on nothing.

But after a while the relatives, too, grew suspicious, and one said he did not believe

Hassan was in prison at all. Fearing they would begin to make inquiries, Fatima ceased to bother them, and she and Hassan once more had to buy their own food. This made Hassan angry, and one night he crept home with a large ruby in his mouth.

"Where does that come from, Hassan?" asked Fatima, trembling.

"The palace," said Hassan. "The Caliph has so many he will never miss one."

The next night he brought another, and so it went on. Every time they had to spend something, Hassan was sure to come home with a jewel.

"When we have enough," said Hassan, "I will take them away to a distant town and change them into gold."

"No," said Fatima, "you must not spend money on a journey. I will change them in the bazaar, and say my rich relations gave them to me."

But, unknown to Hassan, the jewels had already been missed at the palace, and when Fatima took one of them to sell in the bazaar a dealer took it straight to the Caliph's vizier. The vizier went with soldiers to search the hovel of Hassan and Fatima, and there he found a sack of gold pieces and all the Caliph's missing jewels.

Hassan and Fatima, closely guarded, were dragged before the Caliph, and the whole of Baghdad, having heard the story in the bazaar, came to hear the judgment.

Now the Caliph was a good and just ruler, and this is what he said:

"For defrauding the vendors in the bazaar you should be heavily fined and imprisoned; for imposing on and robbing your relations you should be soundly beaten on the soles of your feet; for stealing from the Caliph of Baghdad you should be sentenced to death."

Hassan and Fatima fell on their knees, and implored the Caliph to have mercy.

"I spare you this punishment on one condition," said the Caliph "and that is, that you return home with your ill-gotten gains tied round your necks."

When they found their gold was spared to them, Hassan and Fatima could hardly believe their ears. But they trembled when the caliph's vizier made this decree:

"The first man, woman, child, or living being who barters even a crump to Hassan and Fatima in exchange for their accursed gold shall be hanged dead on the city walls. Haroun, Caliph of Baghdad."

Hassan and Fatima returned home, each

with a heavy bag of gold round the neck, and solidiers were posted at the door to see that no one bartered with them, or that they left the city. At first they were so glad to have back their gold that they cared for nothing but to count the pieces hour after hour. But as the days went by, and no one spoke or came to them, and people ran from them in the streets, and the soldiers followed them wherever they went, they began to be miserable.

They had to eat the garbage in the gutters and drink from the public fountains, and their clothes fell into rags, as no one dared sell them new ones. They had no light or fuel in their hovel, and they shivered from cold and lack of food in the winter nights. And always before their door paced the soldiers.

One day, tottering and ragged, their bones sticking through their skin, and bent beneath the weight of their bags of gold, Hassan and Fatima went to beg audience of the Caliph. Behind them came the soldiers and a crowd of people.

The Caliph came to them in his judgment hall, and they threw themselves in desperation at his feet.

"Take all our gold" cried Hassan; "let us never see it more! But give me work, and

let me earn food and clothes and warmth and liberty." The caliph took the bags of gold and handed them to his retinue.

"Give one to the vendors whom they cheated and one to their poor relations whom thay robbed," he said. "As for you, Hassan and Fatima, it is good you have learned that gold is only a symbol. With gold you can buy many things, but not all, and hoarded gold is one of the chains of death." Then he added, "Give them food and clothes and warmth and work and liberty, and a new life."

VIII

DICK WHITTINGTON

Dick Whittington was a poor Lancashire lad, who having lost his father and his mother, came to London to make his fortune. His only friend in the world was a cat which he had picked up and fed when it was starving; and a very good friend it was to him.

Dick used to think that the streets of London were paved with gold, but he found that they were covered with hard stones, and on these stones he had to sleep with his cat for many nights. At last he got a place as a scullery-boy in the house of a rich merchant.

"Turn again Whittington, Thrice Lord Mayor of London" said Bow Bells.

Unhappily, the cook was a wicked woman, and she beat him every day and made him sleep in a garret overrun with rats and mice. These, however, were soon killed by Dick's cat, for the cat was an excellent mouser.

The rich merchant in whose kitchen Dick worked was a foreign trader. He used to fill his ships with all kinds of goods, and send them to far countries, where the goods could be sold at a great profit; and, being a kind man, he allowed all his servants to put in his ships anything that they wished to sell. One day, when he was about to send a ship to trade with the Blackmoors, his pretty daughter, Alice, came into the scullery and said to Dick:

"Now, what are you going to put in for sale this time?"

"I have only my cat," said Dick.

"Well, put in your cat," said Alice.

And to please her he parted with the only friend he had in the world.

But Dick soon began to miss his cat. The rats and the mice crept back to his garret and kept him awake at night, and the cook beat him more than ever. So hard did Dick's life become that one morning he tied all his things

up into a bundle, and set out to walk to Lancashire.

He got as far as the village of Holloway, and sat down on a stone to rest, and Bow Bells began to chime, and the sound travelled across the fields.

"Turn again, Whitt-ing-ton,
Thrice Lord Mayor of London."

That was what the ding-ding-dong of Bow Bells seemed to say to him. Poor Dick tried to laugh, and began to cry.

It seemed so impossible a thing! But he turned, and went a little way along the road to Finchley.

"Turn again, Whitt-ing-ton.
Thrice Lord Mayor of London," said Bow Bells, and he turned and went a little way along the road to Enfield.

"Turn again, Whitt-ing-ton,
Thrice Lord Mayor of London," said Bow Bells.

"After all," said Dick, "it is only the cook who treats me harshly. How kindly Alice spoke to me! I will turn again, as the bells say, and see what happens."

Something happened as soon as Dick regained his master's house. The ship in which he had put his cat returned with the news

that his cat had been sold at a very great price.

On arriving at the land of the Blackmoors, the captain of the ship went to the king of the country, and was invited to dine at the palace. There he saw an amazing sight. As soon as the dishes were placed on the tables, a vast crowd of rats and mice came and devoured all the food.

"Oh dear!" cried the king of the Blackmoors. "I shall not get anything to eat again to-day."

"Good gracious!" said the captain.

"You ought to keep a cat in your palace to kill all these rats and mice."

"A cat?" said the King. "What's that? Is it a new kind of lion? I have bought hundreds of lions and tigers of all sorts, but none of them would ever kill a mouse for me."

The captain sent a sailor to the ship to get Dick Whittington's cat. When the king of the Blackmoors saw how quickly it killed rat after rat, and mouse after mouse, he clapped his hands and shouted with joy, and said that he would have it even if it cost him half his kingdom.

"Will you take six sacks of gold for this wonderful little animal?" he asked.

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The captain agreed, and the ship came to London laden with the six sacks of gold for Dick Whittington.

The wicked cook told the merchant that Dick was only a poor scullery-boy, without a friend in the world, and that there was no need to give him gold. But the merchant was an honest man. He gave Dick all the money, and had him brought up as if he were his own son, and years after Dick married Alice. He was made Lord Mayor, of London three times, as Bow Bells had said, and he was also knighted by King Henry the Fifth on the King's return from the battle of Agincourt.

IX

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

Many years ago there was an emperor who was so fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on dress.

He did not trouble in the least about his soldiers; nor did he care to go either to the theatre or the chase, except that they gave him opportunities for displaying his new clothes. He had a different suit for each hour of the day; and instead of saying of him "He is sitting in council" people always said "The emperor is sitting in his wardrobe."

Time passed away merrily in the large town which was his capital; strangers arrived every day at the court.

One day two rogues calling themselves weavers made their appearance. They gave out that they knew how to weave stuffs of the most beautiful colours and elaborate patterns, the clothes manufactured from which should have the wonderful power of remaining invisible to every one who was unfit for the office he held, or who happened to be extraordinarily simple in character.

"These must indeed be splendid clothes!" thought the emperor. "Had I such a suit I might at once find out what men in my realm are unfit for their office, and also be able to distinguish the wise from the foolish. This stuff must be woven for me immediately."

And he caused large sums of money to be given to both the weavers in order that they might begin their work directly.

So the two pretended weavers set up two looms, and effected to work very busily, though in reality they did nothing at all. They asked for the most delicate silk and the purest gold thread, put both into their own knapsacks, and then continued their pretended work at the empty looms until late at night.

"I should like to know how the weavers are getting on with my cloth," said the emperor to himself after some little time had elapsed.

He was, however, rather embarrassed when he remembered that a simpleton or one unfit for his office would be unable to see the manufacture.

"To be sure," he thought, "I have nothing to risk in my own person; but yet I would prefer sending somebody else to bring me intelligence about the weavers and their work before I trouble myself in the affair."

All the people throughout the city had heard of the wonderful power the cloth was to possess; and all were anxious to learn how wise, or how ignorant, their neighbours might prove to be.

"I will send my faithful old minister to the weavers," said the emperor at last; "he will be best able to see how the cloth looks, for he is a very sensible man, and no one can be more suitable for his office than he is."

So the faithful old minister went into the hall, where the knaves were apparently working with all their might at their empty looms.

"What can be the meaning of this?"

thought the old man, opening his eyes very wide. "I cannot discover the least bit of thread on the looms!" But he did not express his thoughts aloud.

The impostors requested him to be so good as to come nearer their looms, and then asked him whether the design pleased him, and whether the colours were not very beautiful, at the same time pointing to the empty frames.

The poor old minister looked and looked, but he could not discover anything on the looms, for a very good reason—there was nothing there.

"What!" thought he again, "is it possible I am a simpleton? I have never thought so myself; and, at any rate, if I am, no one must suspect it. Can it be that I am unfit for my office? No, that must not be said either. I will never confess that I could not see the stuff."

"Well, sir minister," said one of the knaves, still pretending to work, "you do not say whether the stuff pleases you."

"Oh, it is admirable!" replied the old minister, looking at the loom through his spectacles. "This pattern and the colours—I will tell the emperor how very beautiful I think them."

"We shall be much obliged to you," said the impostors; and then they named the different colours and described the patterns of the pretended stuff.

And then the knaves asked for more silk and gold, saying that it was necessary to complete what they had begun. However, they put all that was given them into their knapsacks, and continued to work with as much apparent diligence as before at their empty looms.

The emperor now sent them another officer of his court to see how the men were getting on, and to find out whether the cloth would soon be ready. It was just the same with this gentlemen as with the minister; he surveyed the looms on all sides, but could see nothing at all but the empty frames.

"Does not the stuff appear as beautiful to you as did to my lord the minister?" asked the impostors of the emperor's second ambassador.

"I certainly am not stupid!" thought the messenger. "It must be that I am not fit for my good, profitable office! That is very odd! However, no one shall know anything about it." And accordingly he praised the stuff he could not see, and declared that he was delighted with both colours and patterns.

"Indeed, your Imperial Majesty," said he to his sovereign when he returned, "the cloth which the weavers are preparing is extraordinarily magnificent."

And now the emperor himself wished to see the costly manufacture while it was still on the loom.

Accompanied by a select number of officers of the court, among whom were the two honest men who had already admired the cloth, he went to the crafty impostors, who, as soon as they were aware of the emperor's approach, went on working more diligently than ever, though they still did not pass a thread through the looms.

"Is not the work absolutely magnificent?" said the two officers of the crown already mentioned. "If your Majesty will only be pleased to look at it! What a splendid design! What glorious colours!" And at the same time they pointed to the empty frames, for they imagined that everyone but themselves could see the exquisite piece of workmanship.

"How is this?" said the emperor to himself. "I can see nothing. This is indeed a terrible affair! Am I a simpleton or am I unfit to be an emperor? That would be the worst thing that could happen...Oh, the cloth is

charming!" said he aloud. And he smiled most graciously, and looked closely at the empty looms, for on no account would be say that he could not see what two of the officers of his court had praised so much.

All his retinue now strained their eyes, hoping to discover something on the looms, but they could see no more than the others. Nevertheless, they all exclaimed: "Oh, how beautiful?" and advised his Majesty to have some new clothes made from this splendid material for the procession that was going to take place in the town very soon.

The two rogues sat up the whole of the night before the day on which the procession was to take place, and had sixteen lights burning, so that everyone might see how anxious they were to finish the emperor's new suit. When the day arrived they came to the palace with huge boxes, looking very important.

"If your Imperial Majesty will be graciously pleased to have your clothes taken off we will fit on the new suit in front of the looking-glass," they said.

The emperor was accordingly undressed, and the rogues pretended to array him in his new suit, the emperor turning round and round before the looking-glass.

"How splendid his Majesty looks in his new clothes, and how well they fit!" everyone cried out. "What a design! These are indeed royal robes!"

"The canopy which is to be borne over your Majesty in the pageant is waiting," said the master of ceremonies.

"I am quite ready," answered the emperor. "Do my new clothes fit well?" asked he, turning himself round again before the looking glass, in order that he might appear to be examining his handsome suit from all points.

The lords of the bed-chamber, who were to carry his Majesty's train, felt about on the ground as if they were lifting up the ends of the mantle, and pretended to be carrying something, for they would by no means betray anything that looked like simplicity or unfitness for their office.

So now the emperor walked under his high canopy, in the midst of the procession, through the streets of his capital; and all the people standing by and those at the windows cried out:

"Oh, how beautiful are our emperor's new clothes! What a magnificent train there is to the mantle and how gracefully the scarf hangs!" In short, no one would allow that he was unable to see these much-admired clothes.

"But the emperor has nothing on!" said a little child.

"Listen to the voice of innocence!" exclaimed his father. And what the child had said was whispered from one to another in the crowd.

"But he has nothing on!" at last cried out all the people.

The emperor was vexed, for he knew that the people were right. And at last, believing he was really unfit for his throne by reason of his love of trivial things, he resolved to give them up, and ruled his kingdom well.

The weavers, fearing to be punished fled and were forgotten, and the emperor and his people lived happily for many years.

X

THE STORY OF THE MAGIC CARPET

There was once a king who, like nearly all the fairy-story monarchs, had one beautiful daughter.

Everyone in the kingdom, from the scullions to the Lord Chancellor, was in love with the princes. But the king determined that she must wed one of the three noblemen who were his favourities. Unfortunately, he could

not decide which of them he liked best, and the princess was given no choice in the matter.

He therefore sent for the three and said: "I cannot be fretted about this marrige any longer. It is impossible to sleep, or to attend to the Privy Council or to chess, while all the time I am wondering which is the worthiest. Miloutin, Voukashin, or Goiko. Let us settle it in this wise: you shall each travel for a year, and whoever brings back the most remarkable thing shall be my son-in-law."

The three, who were friends as well as rivals, bowed to the king, the princess, and each other, and set off.

Miloutin had not been voyaging many months when he met a gipsy man who had a wonderful telescope for sale. When you looked through it, and wished to see a person, you instantly beheld him, wherever he was. In this way Miloutin saw Voukashin sitting near a tent under some palm trees. As he could recognise the scenery Miloutin had no difficulty in joining his friend.

After polite enquiries about one another's health Voukashin showed Miloutin a carpet which would carry you through the air wherever you wished to go. Then he examined

the telescope, and saw Goiko riding over the desert.

"Let us join him," said Voukashin. So the two sat on the carpet and were immediately borne swiftly to the place.

There were fresh greetings, and then Goiko showed them his prize. It was a small box of ointment, which would cure everything and bring the dead to life.

All at once Miloutin, who had been looking through his telescope, cried out:

"Brothers! I see the princess lying on her bed, pale as snow, while her women stand round weeping."

"I can cure her!" cried Goiko.

"I can take you to her at once!" exclaimed Voukashin.

Very few minutes passed before the three noblemen entered the palace with their gifts under their arms. They found the king sitting with his head in his hands, while his chessmen lay on the floor, for he cared for them no longer.

He looked up, and said: "It is too late; She can marry none of you."

"I can cure your illustrious daughter," said Goiko, bowing low; and, sure enough, no sooner, did the ointment touch her lips

than she sat up, more radiant than ever, asking for a cup of hot chocolate!

"She is yours!" cried the king, embracing Goiko.

"Sire," said Miloutin, "if I had not looked through the telescope, Goiko would not have known the princess was ill."

"And if he had not ridden on my carpet he could never have arrived in time," said Voukashin.

"True," returned the king. "You are all equally worthy, and she cannot marry any of you."

The three bowed, and said. "Sire, your decision is just, but, as we cannot be happy without the princess, pray permit us to leave the court and be miserable in some quiet place."

The king gave his consent. They set off in different directions; and the princess was shortly afterwards married to a foreign prince.

After some years she and her husband took ship to visit the old king. A furious storm arose, and the vessel was blown out of her course, and battered to pieces on the shores of a desert island. Only the princess survived. The poor creature, when she found herself washed upon the barren shore, found

shelter in a cave. There she lived for three years on berries and herbs, without seeing a soul, in great misery. But at last she managed to pierce the jungle of the mainland, and found another cave. To her astonishment she saw that it had a door.

The princess knocked on it, half longing and half afraid to see who should appear. It was Miloutin, in a dress of skins, with a beard that reached to his knees!

When their astonishment was over, and she had told him her troubles, the princess asked what had become of his friends.

"I do not know," Miloutin said, "but I have my telescope, and I will find out."

He discovered that they were both living in caves on the same island! He and the princess soon set out to find them, and great was the four frined's joy at meeting again. But after she had shared their berries and heard their adventures for some days, the hermits decided that it was selfish to keep their dear lady any longer. They brought her the three treasures, and kissed her hands. Then with their arms round one another's necks, they watched the carpet bear her away over the sea to her father's palace.

XI
TOM THUMP

Not far from Fairy land lived a man and his wife who were offen sad because they had no child.

They looked so gentle and kind-hearted that the wizard Merlin thought he would go and see if they really deserved to be happy. So one day he dressed himself in an old, ragged coat and knocked at their door.

"Come in," said the old woman. "Won't you sit down and rest a little? We are very poor, but I am preparing some bread and milk for my husband's dinner, and I will make you some too."

"That is very kind of you," answered the old man, throwing off his clock. "I am the wizard Merlin who can do all things, and because you have been generous and thoughtful for other I will make you a gift. You may choose what it shall be."

"Oh, please," cried the old woman, "we want a little child! Even if it were no bigger than my thumb we should be quite content."

"Very well," said the wizard smiling, and he went away.

When the man and his wife woke up the next morning, there lay beside them a little

child, a boy, so tiny that he really was no bigger than his mother's thumb. When the fairy godmother came, she told the old people that he would never grow any bigger; so they gave him the name of Tom Thumb.

Tom was so small that his godmother had to call for the help of the other fairies to make him a suit of clothes.

They made him a shirt out of a cobweb, a coat of a beetle's wing, shoes of the skin of a mouse, and a cap out of an oak tree leaf. When everything was ready Tom's godmother gave him a little magic sword, which, she told him, he must be sure always to wear.

Tom was a good boy, but he had one bad fault; he was very inquisitive. One day when his mother was making a pudding, there came a knock at the door, and she went to see who was there. She was away so long that Tom began to wonder what was inside the bowl.

He got off his chair, which always stood on the table, and walked round and round the basin, wishing that he could see over the top. By the side of the basin lay a fork.

"Hurrah!" cried Tom, seizing the fork. "This will make a capital ladder."

And he climbed up the prongs until he could reach the top of the basin. But even

then he could hardly see in, for his head only just reached the top.

"I know," said he. "I'll jump."

Tom put both hands on the edge of the basin and jumped. He jumped once, but not quite high enough; he jumped again, but still he could not see. So he jumped a third time, and this time he jumped right into the basin.

At this moment his mother came back, and, taking up the big wooden spoon, was about to stir the pudding when she saw something moving in the basin. This so frightened her that she took up the basin and threw everything in it as far as she could out of the window.

Underneath the window flowed a river, and as Tom trumbled out headlong a big fish came swimming by. The fish opened its mouth, and in fell Tom.

The fish was caught, and it was so fine a fish that it was taken to the palace for the King's dinner. As the cook cut open the fish, out jumped Tom upon the table. When the King heard of it, he ordered Tom to be brought before him.

"Where do you come from, and what is your name?" asked the king.

Tom told his story, and the king was so

"Where do you come from and what is your name?" asked the king.

pleased that he allowed Tom to stay with him and live in the palace.

It was all very splendid, and for a long time Tom enjoyed himself and was very happy. When the king went for a ride, Tom went too; only, instead of a horse, Tom rode on the back of a rat.

As they were riding in the forest one day a big cat sprang out, and, pouncing on the rat and its rider, carried them off into a tree. Tom took out his magic sword, and after a brave fight he killed the cat. Then he turned and began to climb down the tree. But it was a long way for little Tom's legs, and he had not gone far when he felt his foot slipping; and in a minute he would have fallen.

Just then, however, the king missed Tom, and looking round, he was just in time to catch him as he fell.

Tom had had such a fright that when he got back to the palace he felt quite ill and had to go to bed. In the morning the King came to his bedside, and found him very miserable.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the king.

"I want to go home!" sobbed Tom.

"Nonsense!" said the King. "You have everything you can ask for, aud you ought to be very happy."

"I want my mother! Please let me go home!"

"Certainly not!" said the King. "You must stay till I am tired of you."

"O dear!" sighed Tom. "And when will that be?"

"I don't know," said the king, "I like you very much at present."

All that day Tom wondered how he could get away without being caught; but more he wondered the more miserable he became.

He worried so that he became thin and ill, and at last his fairy, godmother, thinking that he had been punished enough for his inquisitiveness, determined to help him. So she went to Tom's beside, and Tom, jumping for joy, begged to be taken home.

The carriage was waiting on the window-sill. They got in, and away they sailed over the house-tops till they came to the cottage where Tom lived.

When they saw Tom again, his father and mother cried for joy, and they all lived happily together for the rest of their lives.

XII
ROBIN HOOD AND HIS MERRY MEN

One day, when Richard Coeur de Lion King of England, there walked in the beauti-

ful green forest of Sherwood a handsome youth and a beautiful maid who were lovers plighted to be wed. The youth was Robert, son of the Earl of Huntingdon; the maid was Marian, daughter of the Earl of Fitzwalter. They both loved the greenwood; they both shot exceedingly well with the bow; and the maid was as swift to mount and ride a horse as was the youth at her side.

As they walked hand in hand down the green glades of the forest, Robert spoke of the merry days that lay ahead of them, and Marian laughed to think of the great joy that was coming to her. They were happy lovers, a boy and a girl who thought of life as a delightful ballad.

But a little thing happened. The king was in Palestine, and his wretched brother, John Lackland, ruled the kingdom. To get money and curry favour with the Normans this miserable man made war upon the rich English nobles, and among those whom he destroyed and ruined was the Earl of Huntingdon. Poor, brave, happy Robert saw in a single day his father killed, his home destroyed, his estates seized, and himself made an outlaw.

He escaped from the soldiers of John, and plunging into the thick forest of Sherwood,

threw himself down on the green earth and wept for the ruin that had so suddenly overtaken him.

'When morning was come he took counsel with himself, and planned how he should live his life. The night in the open air had been sweet to him; he drew the scented cool air into his lungs, left the glory of the daybreak caress him, and saw that the greenwood was a fair world.

"Since John has made an outlaw of me," he said, "I will take this forest for my estate, and feed upon the king's venison, and call myself Robin of Sherwood."

He wrote a sad letter to Maid Marian telling her of all his misfortunes, and setting her free of her vow, as he could not ask a great lady to share his outaw's life in the forest.

It cost him many a sigh to send this letter, but his loneliness in the greenwood, which made it so hard for him to give up his lady love, was soon broken by a delightful interruption. Brave men who had served his father, the Earl, came into the forest with their bows and arrows, and swore that they would spend their days with Robin. They refused to live under the Normans; they would be outlaws, they said—free, merry men of the greenwood and

Robin should be their king. And they lived in the forest near Nottingham, which town Robin sometimes visited in disguise.

Thus it happened that Robin became the chief of a band of stout Englishmen who feared no danger, courted adventure, and loved a jest. This company soon arranged how they should live.

In those days, when roads were hard to find, people travelled on horseback, and many a plump abbot and covetous merchant went past the forest with their saddle-bags stuffed with gold. Robin declared that he saw no wrong in relieving these people of their baggage, as they only lived to rob the poor; he would treat them with kindness, he said, but he would help himself to their money. As for the poor and needy, no man of his must lay a finger upon them; nay, out of the soil wrung from the rich they must help these poor people, and do their best to make them glad and happy.

Once Robin played an amusing trick on a tinker who said he had the king's warrant to arrest the famous outlaw. Robin told him he would find him in Nottingham, and offered to help him. When they came to the town he gave him so much ale that he fell asleep, and

Robin walked off and left the tinker to pay the bill at the inn.

In this way Robin lived cheerfully. His fame spread through all the country. People whom he stopped and robbed told strange stories of how they had been carried far into the forest, treated to a feast worthy of a king used with all courtesy and kindness, and after having "paid for the entertainment" had been pleasantly led forth and set upon their road again.

They told how Robin had dressed all his men in suits of Lincoln green; and how these cheerful fellows sang the old English ballads and made great sport with the bow; and how there was one of their members seven feet high called Little John, another, a very small and squat man named Much, and a jovial, fat priest named Friar Tuck; and how Robert was called, not Robin of Sherwood, but Rodin Hood, and was like a king among his merrymen. No wonder that as these stories spread about the world the Sheriff of Nottingham felt that he must catch Master Robin and hang him for a rascally outlaw not fit to live.

The outlaws, however, ran great risks, and Little John even became, a servant in the

house of sheriff himself, where he played several tricks on a greedy old butler, finally knocking him over and running off to the forest with the silver plate belonging to the sheriff.

Some time after the outlaws ventured into the town again to compete in an ordinary contest held by the sheriff for a silver arrow. Robin won the prize, but the sheriff tried to arrest him and in the strife that ensued Little John was wounded and the outlaws only with great difficulty got away, little Much bearing big Little John for some distance on his back.

As Robin rode through the forest one day he came upon a young knight, and challenged him. They fought together, and Robin wounded the knight, He knelt at his side, and the poor youth took off his helmet, and lo! it was Maid Marian. Robin could have cried with grief for wounding her; but when he saw that the wound was not deep, and learned that Marian had come disguised in search of her lover, he was glad, and embraced her most tenderly, and led her back to the Trysting Tree. Here he blew on his horn to summon his men. They came from every part of the forest, and when they had heard the story they

offered obedience to Maid Marian as their queen, and jolly old Friar Tuck came rolling up with his book under his arm and married Robin to Maid Marian there in the glades of the forest.

One day Robin stopped an unhappy youth named Allan-a-Dale, and learned that, after waiting long for the beautiful woman who loved him, her miserly old father had promised her in marriage to an ancient, hideous, but rich man, old enough to be her grandfather. The marriage was to take place on the morrow, and poor Allan-a-Dale was broken-hearted.

Robin bade him cheer up, and on the morrow he set off for the church, with his merry men following behind. In the midst of the ceremony he stopped the Bishop of Hereford, who was reading the service, and, blowing on his horn, summoned all his merry men, with Allan-a-Dale and Friar Tuck in their midst.

"This bridegroom is too old," said Robin Hood: then, addressing the bride, "Lady" said he, "look round and see if you cannot find one more to your choice."

She chose Allan-a-Dale, and Friar Tuck married them then and there.

On another occasion he exchanged clothes with a potter, and took his cartload of pots and sold them in the market place at Nottingham and on yet another occasion he stoped a butcher who was riding with panniers of meat into the market, and, changing clothes with him, set out for the very town where lived the sheriff who had sworn to lay him by the heels. The streets were crowded, and Robin amazed everybody by selling his best beef at onlytwo pence a pound. The sheriff heard of this strange young butcher and his doings, and at the market feast bade him sit at his side.

"I shall get money out of such a simpleton," thought the sheriff, who was a miser, and asked if Robin had a big farm.

"Hundreds of acres," answered Robin, smiling to himself.

"And much cattle?"

"Hundreds and hundreds of the finest horned cattle."

"Do not speak so loud," mumbled the old sheriff; "but tell me how much you would take for your acres and cattle."

"Three hundred pounds," said Robin.

The sheriff arranged to ride out very early next morning with this silly young butcher.

Robin Hood

They rode on till they approached Sherwood Forest.

"A bad man lives here," said the sheriff. "Do yo think we shall meet him? Robin Hood is his name."

"Oh, I am sure we shall not!" answered Robin, laughing.

Just then a hundred head of good fat deer passed in front of them.

"There go my horned cattle." laughed Robin. "What do you think of them? Are they not good?"

The sheriff rode back to Nottingham late that night with no farm, no horned cattle, and without the three hundred pounds which he had brought with him for their purchase from the simple butcher.

Another of Robin's enemies was the Bishop of Hereford, who had never forgiven Robin for his interference in Allan-a-Dale's marriage. He came riding into Sherwood Forest one bright summer day with a company of soldiers, oarrying money to a distant monastery. He hoped to capture Robin on his way, and take him to the sheriff of Nottingham. As luck would have it, Robin was strolling alone about the forest that day, listening to the blackbirds and thrushes, and enjoying the

sweet scents of bariar-rose, honeysuckle, and bracken.

Before he knew it, the bishop's soldiers saw him, and charged down upon him. Robin took to his heels. He dodged behind trees, crept along ditches, and ran down the narrowest glades. The horses of the soldiers tripped and stumbled, throwing their riders to the ground. Robin ran hard till he reached the cottage of a poor woman. He changed clothes with her, and promised that if she remained quiet and let the bishop capture her no harm should befall her.

As soon as she knew that she could serve good Robin Hood, and do a bad turn to the wicked bishop who oppressed the poor, the old woman was glad. So Robin hobbed away, and the soldiers took no notice of him; but they went to the cottage, captured the dame, in Robin's Lincoln green, and bore her off with them. Not very far had they gone, however, before Robin stood in their way with his bowmen on every side of them. The soldiers laid down their arms, and the bishop had to deliver up all his treasure.

"It belongs to the Monastery of St. Mary," said the bishop.

"Nay," answered Robin', it belongs to the

poor, from whom you have taken it, and to whom it shall now return."

Then he made the bishop celebrate High Mass; and all his men praised God among the trees in the forest.

On one occasion Robin lent a poor knight a sum of four hundred pounds wherewith to pay a selfish abbot who had lent it to him. The knight arrived at the abbey only just in time to discharge his debt, and found the abbot laughing in company with a justice of the peace whom he had invited to dine with him and arrange for the transfer of the knight's broad acres to the abbey.

The knight, to the abbot's disgust paid the four hundred pounds, upbraided the abbot for his greed, and rode home, blessing the kindness of Robin Hood.

A stout and long encounter, too, had Robin with giant Friar Christopher of Fountains Abbey. He shot all his arrows at him, but the Friar stopped them with his shield, and they then fought hard with swords until they became great friends, and the Friar went off with Robin Hood and his men into the greenwood.

Such stories as these came to the ear of King Richard when he returned from the Holy Land, and he determined to see Robin Hood.

But though he rode many times in Sherwood Forest he saw nothing of Robin or his merry men. He was then advised to put on the dress of a monk, and so disguised he travelled though the forest, and was seized by Robin, through the king gave him a blow that sent him sprawling on the ground first. The king was treated fairly and given a feast, and in the midst of it he showed his ring to Robin, and said that, though a monk he was a messenger of the king. At the name, Robin, and all his men stood up, uncovered, and cried: "God save King Richard!"

The king then disclosed himself and Robin knelt and kissed his hand. So pleased was the king with his loyalty, and so struck was he by Robin's goodness, that he gave him a free pardon. Robin and his merry men followed the king to London, and there they feasted and had great cheer.

But when Richard died, and John succeeded to the throne, Robin and his merry men had to flee once more to the forest. They were not very sorry, for they loved the wild life of the greenwood, and they were not afraid of John while they had the familiar forest for a kingdom of their own.

The years passed, and Robin grew very ill, and when he watched the young men shoot, he grew sad at heart.

He said he thought he would go and visit his relative, the Princess of Kirkley Abbey, in Yorkshire. Little John, who was very grieved at his master's sickness, bore him thither. He wanted to be near his master and nurse him; but the princess would not hear of this, and ordered him to go and wait in the abbey garden.

Then she made a wound in Robin's arm to bleed him, but instead of tightly bandaging the wound afterwards, this woman, who in her wicked heart hated Robin for his robberies of monks and priors, loosely knotted the linen, and went out, locking the door behind her. So Robin lay alone, bleeding to death, and the faithful Little John stayed in the garden of the abbey, gazing up at this beloved master's window.

Twilight fell upon the garden. Presently three soft notes sounded faintly upon Robin's horn.

"He must be dying to blow so weakly!" cried Little John, and started up. He ran up the stairs, reched the door, burst it open, and rushed in to embrace his master.

"I am dying," said Robin, and swooned in his arms.

After a moment he roused himself.

"Give me my good bow and an arrow," he said.

He took the bow, and crossed over to the window.

"I will shoot once more," he said, "and where the arrow falls, in that place let me be buried."

He was so weak that the arrow went but a little way before striking the ground.

"A good shot! A good shot!" cried Little John, with his eyes full of tears.

"Was it a good shot?" demanded Robin eagerly. "Really a good shot?"

"'T was a good shot, master,"
Then Robin said:

Lay me a green sod under my head:
And another at my feet,
And lay my bent bow my side,
Which was my music sweet;
And make my grave of gravel and green,
Which is most right and meet.
Let me have length and breadth enough,
With a green sod at my head,
That they may say when I am dead
Here lies bold Robin Hood.

As he lay swooning in the arms of Little John he suddenly roused himself, and looked earnestly forth from the priory window toward the gathering darkness of the night.

"Was it," he whispered hoarsely, straining his failing eyes, "was it a good shot?"

THE END

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